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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000462

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MINING ISSUES IN NORTH KIVU...AND RWANDOPHONIE

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Garvelink for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

¶1. (C) We met on May 8 with a contact at MPC, the South African mining company that holds the GDRC-granted concession on North Kivu's largest cassiterite mine, located at Bisie in Walikale. He confirmed that control on the ground at the mine has passed from the FARDC's 85th brigade to newly integrated CNDP commanders. Rwandophone purchasing houses are now buying up a larger share of the output, although key elements of the old network of interests also remain in place. President Kabila, meanwhile, has assured MPC that the newly integrated CNDP would leave Bisie by mid-June. End Summary.

Control of the Bisie Mine

¶2. (C) We met on May 8 with a contact at MPC, the South African company that holds the concession to the Bisie cassiterite mine in Walikale. Our contact confirmed that Colonel Sammy and the FARDC's 85th brigade have vacated Bisie and the surrounding area, leaving the mine in the hands of newly integrated CNDP forces. Colonels Manzi and Hassan are reportedly now in charge (Note: They also controlled Bisie under the RCD. End Note). Artisanal mining continues at Bisie. Production remains at pre-January levels and continues to pass almost exclusively through Goma via light aircraft. However, our contact, who has agents tracking the cassiterite from mine to export, said purchasing houses in Goma with close ties to Rwanda and formerly the RCD are now buying up a larger percentage of the output. Noting that last week a man came to Bisie from Rwanda to buy one week's worth of output, our contact speculated that this may signal the establishment of more direct Rwandan involvement in Bisie.

¶3. (C) FARDC General Amisi has long been involved in the Bisie operation. Under Colonel Sammy, Amisi had two "agents" permanently on the mine. They left when Sammy did, but our MPC contact confirmed that they have now returned and that Amisi (a Tutsi and former key member of the RCD) continues to receive a cut of the profits. General Mayala and others have also reportedly re-established their positions in the operation.

Kabila's Reaction

¶4. (C) MPC representatives have met with President Kabila and the Minister and Deputy Minister for Mines several times since January. Over the years, MPC has reportedly passed

several dossiers to Kabila through high-level interlocutors, detailing the illegal exploitation of Bisie by the FARDC. According to our contact, Kabila, in a recent meeting, claimed never to have seen any of the dossiers. On the contrary, senior officials had in fact told the president repeatedly that MPC had no intention of mining the concession. When he heard MPC's case firsthand, Kabila was apparently furious that his subordinates had withheld the MPC dossiers from him. He immediately called Deputy Minister of Mines Victor Kasongo (Note: Kasongo has arguably wielded more influence at the ministry than many of the ministers for whom he has worked. End Note), instructing Kasongo, in the presence of MPC representatives, to ensure that the FARDC leaves the Bisie mine so that MPC can take control. Kabila assured MPC that the newly integrated CNDP forces would leave Bisie by mid-June.

Comment

15. (C) Our contact's information about Colonels Manzi and Hassan and the growing role of Rwandophone-linked purchasing houses is a useful reminder that, in many ways, many observers view the Rwandophone agenda as simply a return to the days of the RCD, albeit in a more subtle form. In terms of Kabila's role in the Bisie mine, our contact's overall impression was that the president was grappling with forces hostile to him in the Kivus and in Rwanda, and was slowly trying to bring things under his control by, for example, moving the newly integrated CNDP out of the Petit Nord. This

KINSHASA 00000462 002 OF 002

might suggest that Kabila was forced to concede influence in the Petit Nord to Rwanda and CNDP under duress, and he is perhaps now trying to roll back, or at least put a firm end date on, some of the concessions he may have made.
GARVELINK